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WINDFALLS

A VOLUME OF DESULTORY VERSE

BY

S. H. BATTY-SMITH

CAMBRIDGE:
W. HEFFER & SONS LTD.
LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & CO. LTD.
1911

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I dedicate this book to Bradfield, where I wrote most of such good and bad verse as it contains, and where I also found any inspiration that ever accrued to me.

S. H. B.-S.

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PREFACE

I feel that a word of explanation is due for having printed these poems. I have called them "Windfalls" because I expect that the general criticism will be that they are hopelessly immature and ought never to have been printed. That is very likely true; yet if one does not publish one's Juvenilia while one is still juvenile, one probably will never publish them at all; but certain good friends of mine persuaded me that some persons at any rate appreciated my poems, so on their advice and to celebrate my legal coming of age I venture to add one more to the list of minor poets.

These poems have been written between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one, and therefore the extraordinary discordance of points of view must be explained by the mental chaos of this period of one's life. I should like to say that at the present moment I disown all the Socialistic opinions and a great many of the others.

S. H. BATTY-SMITH.

October 1911.

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SUMMER.

O bind the sandals on thy silver feet,
  While dawn yet stains the distant hills pale rose,
  And down the wind a sheep-bell's tinkle flows
And rippling eddies stir the infant wheat.
A thousand birds shall sing aloud to greet
  Thy coming, and a thousand flowers unclose—
  Ah, lo, where each a dreamy perfume throws
To scent the air thy radiant pinions beat.
Summer, the days are sad when thou art gone,
  Withered the joy of life; the blood abates
Its course, runs slow; we half forget there shone
  A while ago the sun; before the Fates
Tore thee away; cast winter fogs upon
  The weary heads of thy initiates.

AUTUMN.

Crown of the dying year, thou dreamy time
  Of mellow days and golden harvest moons,
  To whom the west wind softly wailing croons
Forgotten love-songs of a southern clime,
Thou art the very soul of song and rhyme,
  And every falling leaf that whirls and swoons,
  Weaves thee a thousand mystic Northern runes,
Wrought long ago in Odin's magic prime.
Thou art the queen of all the splendid year,
  Crowned with the wonder of a red gold wood,
And flashing with the gems given thee to wear
  By frost, the lover of thy sweet wild mood.
O melancholy majesty, so dear,
  Who would have joy instead, even if he could?

SOCIALISM.

Man with the angels sings no more in tune,
  And in the symphony of days and years
  Are heard strange discords. Ghostly hopes and fears
Have flown betwixt the twilight and the moon
And sown unrest. By many a dim lagoon
  The way-worn spirit of the age with tears
  And groans of travail, watches, prays, and hears
Above the voice of cynic and buffoon
A voice which tells her that her child shall be
  Regenerator of the weary earth,
And bring the one true aristocracy
  Of merit, not of unearned wealth, or birth,
And teach us in the great sphere-harmony
  Our part, and fill with bloom the place of dearth.

R. N. C. H. IN ITALY.

I know not if I ought to envy you
  The sight of Venice and Verona,—dreams,
  The twain of them—or so to me it seems—
Not meet to visit or to wander through;
Verona!—Juliet and Romeo!—
  No town, but one of Shakespeare's magic themes,
  And Venice!—She an ocean-wraith that gleams
Athwart a dying sunset's stormy hue.
I too could wish to tread those silent fanes
  And see the ill-starred lovers' tomb, or glide
Along those wondrous marble-girt sea-lanes
  Where once the ships of every nation plied—
Save always that a haunting dread remains
  Lest now no more the old-world charm abide.

THE RIVER PANG.

Most fair in all thy varied course thou art,
  But fairest where thy glassy waters glide
  Adorned with lilies, like a dark-haired bride
On whose soft breast they nestle, next her heart.
Bright dragon-flies, live sapphires, flit and dart
  On glittering jewelled wings from side to side,
  Where blue forget-me-nots with blushes pied
And irises in golden glory, start.
The long lush grasses bend beneath the wind,
  Whene'er with tender sweep of summer rain
He sways their scented heads, filling the mind
  With utter peace. So fair the scene, nor brain
Nor soul the dullard cares of earth can bind;
  Thy hymn of beauty makes all else seem vain.

SKETCH NEAR BRADFIELD.

Gold sheaves of iris gleam amid the sedge,
Forget-me-nots and moss embank the edge
  Of lily-wreathed cool streams that image back
The wild-rose stars strewn on the hawthorn hedge.

CHANSON DU DÉPART.

Alas, we do not recognise our trust,
  Until the time is come to yield it up;
And then a wild regret for chances thrust
  Aside in scorn, assails us, and life's cup
    Is bittered with our tears.

Alas, we do not sound the depths of love,
  Until the well-beloved is torn away;
And then the very stars leer from above,
  Which shone so kindly once, and even the day
    Grows hateful and accursed.

Alas, we do not value well our joy,
  Until fate comes, and leaves us only grief;
For then the coin of life is but alloy,
  And gold no more; the falling of the leaf
    Reveals the gaunt black bough.

Alas, we do not realise our debt,
  Until the debt no longer can be paid;
But then we look, and lo, the sun is set,
  The glories of the west grow pale and fade—
    At night no man can work.

O hopeless love, and grief beyond all tears,
  Give o'er self-torment in thy secret cell;
Descend, and do thy battle with the years
  That still remain, and all may yet go well—
    Thou hast the twilight hour.

LEAVING BRADFIELD.

The ivory and ebon chariot,
  Fair-wrought of days and nights, is at the gate;
The steeds of time grow restive, which are not
  For mortal hands to hold, we may not wait;
Upon our cheeks the blinding tears are hot,
  Once more farewell, already it is late.

Swiftly the good times hasten to their close;
  Youth rushes to the zenith, falls, and dies;
All we must perish even with yonder rose,
  But thou, O Mother, always young, shalt rise
Fairer with love of every life that goes
  From thee to wrestle with the destinies.

O Mother, stern as nature, kind as death,
  Goodly the crowded years we owe to thee.
Though little have we done that profiteth
  Thine honour in the days that are to be,
Yet bless us as each one departing saith
  Adieu, that we may go forth joyfully.

Others, it may be, shall forget, but we
  Not so; O Mother, in this last farewell
We mingle grief more bitter than the sea
  With love unfailing as the fire of hell.
Farewell, the last, and may God be with thee,
  But au revoir, ah no! for who can tell?

TO H. R. L. WITH OMAR KHAYYÁM'S RUBÁIYÁT.

Upon the agèd forehead of the world,
  Which time has scored with lines of pain and grief,
England has laid a fragrant crown of song
  That shines with deathless bloom and ageless leaf.
The glowing blossoms fade not as the swift
  Days wither and are gone, and the sweet scent
Grows never fainter—nay, but some would seem
  The richer by each year's emolument.
Lo, one of these I send you, that waved first
  On the rose-trellises of Naishápúr,
But in these latter days has bloomed again
  And charmed us with its old-world Persian lure.
Let these quatrains, transplanted from the East,
  And woven in the wreath of English song,
Be for a sign of peace 'twixt you and me,
  And as you love them, be the peace so long.

SERENADE.

You are leaning from your window,
Drinking deep of starlit air,
You have loosened from its trammels
The rich wonder of your hair,
And your arms upon the window-sill are gleaming white and bare.

Somewhere from the room behind you
Mellow candles throw their light,
And your form looks yet more slender
In the darkness of the night,
And around your head the radiance, like a halo, flickers bright.

Passion-pale the moon is floating
In a velvet depth of sky,
And your face beneath her glory
Is as tinted ivory,
And your eyes as peerless jewels royal ransoms could not buy.

Yonder, lo, a girl is singing;
Parted lips and eager gaze
Tell me you are listening breathless
To the cadence of each phrase,
As she sings of love and lovers in the old more lovely days.

See, the breezes scarcely ruffle
Sable shrubs and plumèd trees;
Life is short, but love eternal,
Drain its wine unto the lees,
Launch your barque upon its ocean, sail its undiscovered seas.

A RED ROSE.

Do you know what it means in the language of flowers,
The dark red rose you have given me,
Born of the dew and the sunny hours
And fragrant with promise of joy to be.

Do you mean what it says in the language of flowers?
Ah, no! such joy were too great to be.
Yet I hope and I pray that the kindly hours
Will plant in your heart a bloom for me.

SONG.

So, then you are betrothed to-day,
    Madonna mine?
What is it you would have me say,
    Madonna mine?
Good luck! and may God be with you,
Bless you, and keep your lover true,
  Madonna, O madonna mine!

Can I say truly I am glad,
    Madonna mine?
If you rejoice should I be sad,
    Madonna mine?
Yet if he love as I, 'tis well;
His love will last through heaven and hell,
  Madonna, O madonna mine!

I carry next my heart a rose,
    Madonna mine,
A daffodil that faded grows,
    Madonna mine—
Not for the wealth of all Cathay
Would I now barter them away,
  Madonna, O madonna mine!

Why did you call me by a name,
Madonna mine,
That from no other lips e'er came,
Madonna mine?
Only in jest then has it been
That I was knight and you were queen,
Madonna, O madonna mine?

Why did you write me kindly words,
Madonna mine,
That stab me now like flaming swords,
Madonna mine?
Two years ago—twelve months—this year's—
Lo, where each pile is wet with tears,
Madonna, O madonna mine!

You sang your dainty chansonettes,
Madonna mine,
Which none that heareth can forget,
Madonna mine,
You bound my soul with gyve and chain—
You cannot set it free again,
Madonna, O madonna mine!
Still mine, ah yes, still mine!

WITH A VOLUME OF SWINBURNE.

He gathered life's red roses
  From ancient faerie lands,
Where love at ease reposes
  On lily-scented strands;
Transmuted with his cithar
To songs that do not wither,
Lo, I have brought them hither,
  To lay them in your hands.

REQUIEM.

Farewell, O brother, who dost dwell no more
With us on earth,
And whose poor human vesture we restore
Whence it drew birth.

We look our last upon the earthly form
That thou didst wear,
Whence death has smoothed away those lines the storm
Of life writ there.

We bear thy weary body to the rest
That ends the day;
Lie softly on the hill-side's gentle breast,
Brother, we pray.

No tears for thee; for if there be a soul
Thou art with God;
If not, one hears no storm or thunder-roll
Beneath the sod.

A few white flowers in the name of love,
No pagan show;
For thou, if thou couldst see us from above
Wouldst have it so.

* * * *

And when I die, the form I wore with ye
To fire consign,
Then cast my ashes in the nameless sea—
No tomb be mine.

I want no memory save what ye may hold
Within the heart,
For, comrades, that shall be, when all is told,
The better part.

DE PROFUNDIS.

The ways are dark; I scarce can see the road,
  Enshrouded in the gloom of doubt,
  Where lurking shadows flit about
With flail and goad.

Decaying leaves sweep down the wind that raves
  Ice-cold across the wayside, lined
  With those the battle left behind
In nameless graves.

The Fates have overturned the cross-ways sign
  In hideous mirth; I cannot tell
  Heaven's road from that which leads to hell.
Ah, which is mine?

Yon beacon fire may be a star, or pass
  And stand revealed a Will-o'-the-Wisp;
  No light is sure till death dawns crisp
Upon the grass.

The shadows urge me on, as one possessed;
  I know not where my steps may lead;
  Only that all in vain I plead
To turn or rest.

WITH A VOLUME OF YEATS.

When you are tired and life cries overloud,
  Go softly down the silent vale of dreams,
Where pale wild roses blossom in a cloud
  Of fragrance by cool lily-wreathèd streams;
Take in your hand this slender gift of mine,
  To charm away all wounds and weariness—
Ah, so, where odorous dream-flowers entwine,
  Surely the peace of God draws near to bless.
For there is rest among these dreaming isles,
  And commune with great heroes who are dead,
And queens—lo, there even sad Deirdre smiles,
  Where pain and tears are scarce rememberèd.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

Feebly cling we still to the skirts of Being;
Soon the numbed hand yields; then in mercy send us
Sunny days once more, that the life depart not:
Spare us, O Winter!

WRITTEN IN YEATS' "WHERE THERE IS NOTHING."

In woods and lonely places God still walks
At eventide, they say, and even talks
  Sometimes with chance-met strangers 'neath the stars.
But unbelievers from the city street
Have driven Him forth, lest maybe one might meet
  The shadow of his own sin seeking him.
For where is nothing there we may find all;
Subdue the flesh—it is a stifling pall—
  That soul may speak with God at last, and know.

FAILURE.

This is the end; they fail me one by one,
  The things that make life lovely; be it so:
  For what so long I feared, at last I know,
That not by such as I the race is run.

The well is empty, all the flowers are dead,
  The unripe fruit is withered on the bough;
  Well, better so; I shall not sorrow now
To hear the last earth shovelled o'er my head.

I know this, there is only one thing kind,
  And only one thing lovely upon earth,
  One prize alone that recompenses birth,
Calm Death, where all at last their rest shall find.

A VISION.

The golden daffodils, and crocuses
Purple and saffron, flamed amid the moss
That made the hill-side soft as eastern stuffs
From pillaged palaces of Ispahan;
And as the late spring day sank towards the west
There came a maiden slowly down the hill;
Whose brown hair rippled in the playful breeze
And blew about her brows like flowery brakes
That half conceal a forest pool. The world
Was wild with all the wonder of the spring,
But in the maiden's eyes the dying day
Shone wanly, and her fair white silken dress
Was flushed with rosy shadows. Save her belt,
Which was of gold, she wore no ornament,
Except upon her breast forget-me-nots,
Whose blue might match her eyes, whose tender pink
Rivalled the wild rose blooming in her cheeks.
Her seven maids of honour followed her,
Arrayed as she, with lilies in their hands

And lilies of the valley on their breasts;
And they were gay and laughed among themselves,
But she went on alone as one fate-led,
Who goes unseeing to an unknown goal.
Slowly the little band passed down the path
That wound about the bases of the hills,
And she with arms outstretched and steadfast eyes
Led onward toward the river in the vale.
    And then she lifted up her voice and sang,
A strange song in a half-forgotten tongue,
But soft and slow and full of rest and peace;
And the seven maids were silent, hushed in awe.
For though they knew not what it was she sang,
The music seemed to tell of all the woes
Of all the world, healed wholly by the hand
Of kindly death; of all the meannesses,
The pitiful small crimes, unspoken loves,
The unavailing sacrifices, wars,
The unintended cruelties, the wrongs
A word could end, but did not come to end,
Misunderstandings and the strife of creeds—

All healed, all ended by the hand of death.
For first she sang of the blind race of men
That strives towards the light, the wasted toil,
The hopeless labour; then she sang at last,
Even as she reached the river, how the grief,
The suffering, and the sinning of the world,
Were only fragments of the good God's plan;
And as she sang her voice grew full and clear
And happy, and at last she ceased and smiled.
Awhile she knelt and prayed; and then she rose
And pushed aside the reeds, and there was seen
A black barge with an old old ferryman—
Older than time, older than aught that is.
She kissed the maids and charged them not to weep,
For she was going to the farther shore,
And though the mist was thick and hid the shore
Yet she should reach it and be happy there,
And one day they should come as she had come,
And be with her.
So then she stepped aboard,
And the old boatman rowed out on the stream,

And as they gazed the barge grew grey and dim
And faded in the mist, and she was gone.
Then they remembered how she sat so still
And gazed across the waters, and they wept.
    At last the wind blew chilly, and they turned
And shivered, and behold the sun had set,
And their white skirts were muddy and dew drenched.
Then sorrowfully they climbed the mountain path,
And lo, the flowers were faded and half dead.
    But one watched on the summit of the hill
Beside a little clump of pines, and wept
Because he loved the maiden who was gone.
And he sat still upon a fallen rock,
Until the stars came out and he arose
And called his sheep and led them to the fold.
But as he went he played upon his reed
A pastoral that rang with utter grief.
He sang of folly and of wasted hopes,
And how the grave shall be the end of all,
And how the river had no farther shore,
But stretched for ever, dreary, limitless.

And so he ended, as before his gaze
There rose the picture of the dreary barge
With one white figure seated in the bows
And the old boatman rowing in the mist;
And as the stars came out he thought of her
Drifting for ever in the sightless mist,
And how he should not see her any more.

ON THE CAM—NOVEMBER.

All through the grey fens to the grey North Sea
  The pallid purple river flows,
Beneath the quiet that eternally
  Is on these levels where none goes.
And if the whistle of a distant train
  Is heard, or rhythmic sound of oars,
More heavily the stillness falls again
  Where men bring neither toil nor wars:
And as the sun sets the world grows more grey—
  The zenith only still is blue,
Whence fade the cloud-wrack and the mist away
  In green and saffron woven through
With rosy bronze and shifting golden light;
  And as the water grows more wan
The moon comes out and glimmers soft and white
  Upon its bosom, like a swan;
By Baitsbite lock the stream is dark and green,
  The weir lies white athwart the flood,
As the sun's dying rays incarnadine
  The water with a pool of blood.

I.M. KING EDWARD VII.

Bring violets, to mourn him as a king—
  Purple for sign of an imperial sorrow,
  Purple to mark the gloom that shrouds our morrow
Beneath the shade of the Death Angel's wing.

Bring lilies to adorn a statesman's grave—
  White for the peace he kept for us with strangers,
  White for the great soul that amid all dangers
Was never aught but steadfast, true, and brave.

Bring poppies that the weary flesh may sleep
  The dreamless sleep whence there is no rude waking,
  And he know not that hearts for him are aching,
Nor see the silent multitudes that weep.

The fairest flower of all bring at the end—
  A flower in a sacred garden growing,
  Whose scent is pure and sweet beyond all knowing—
The flower of grief for him who was a friend.

Pray for the ship whose pilot is no more,
Pray that she safely come at last to shore:
Pray that from strife at home and foreign war
        God save us all.

THAT WE FORGET NOT.—MAY 1910.

When the Dead March is done, the last prayer said,
When the last hymn is sung, the last tear shed,
  When the last wreath fades and the flowers fall,
Pray God that we forget not then our dead.

When all the pomp and pageantry are past,
When the flags droop no longer at half-mast,
  When we have laid aside our mourning dress,
A little longer may his memory last.

May the dead statesman teach us how to steer
Through the white breakers that loom now so near,
  That, even as when he lived, nor foreign greed
Nor party strife give England cause for fear.

By us who mourn for our most kingly dead
'T were well that that which all the world has said,
  "He did his duty fearless to the end
In face of death," should be rememberèd.

THE MYSTIC.

Led of the spirit through his lonely places,
  Where roads are rough, and sharp with rock and stone,
Yet roses bloom with perilous strange graces
  That kings have sought to know, but have not known,
Behold the pilgrim, lone but yet not lonely—
  Though sun and moon reel madly in the sky,
He seeks the heart of the eternal only,
  Trusting the deathless stars that do not lie.

Sometimes afar from man's so fretful crying,
  A half-imagined chaunting fills the night,
And unto him in some dream-garden lying,
  The Grail dawns faintly in a mist of light.
The unknowable grows day by day more certain,
  The bond of sense for ever weakeneth,
As veil by veil he draws aside the curtain
  That some call life but others have named death.

A SUNSET—NORTH SEA.

Pale blue and green, and bronze just touched with
rose,
And banks of faintest purple clouds,
O'erarch a sea that neither ebbs nor flows,
But as a maid whom sleep enshrouds,
Breathes softly in the silence whence the day
Gazes into her eyes.

THE STATUE AND THE MOON.

The moon, which shines on Melos and the isles
  That star the purple garment of the sea,
Looks down on me with sad and altered smiles—
  Pale moon, my broken arms are calling thee!

In Melos, when the moon and I were young,
  He came, my golden lover, where I stood
Beneath the rafters whence the vine leaves hung,
  Beside the ghostly roses in the wood.

When other lovers laughing wandered past,
  I looked up, longing, to my low-hung moon,
Dreaming that love like ours would live and last,
  Though men grew old and went away so soon.

For every year I saw fresh faces pass;
  And sometimes, grey and old, they came again
When youth had faded with the fading grass
  And love had fled before the face of pain.

But still the seas broke foaming on the shore,
  And still the stars bloomed in the silent sky,
And night by night that they should cease we swore
  Before our love should fail—the Moon and I.

Now Greece is dead and all the world is old,
  And I am lonely in a northern land,
Stared at by stranger folk whose hearts are cold,
  Who gape because they do not understand.

Lone in the chill museum corridor,
  With broken arms I cry to him in vain—
Ah, love, that youth should come again no more!
  —He looks so wanly through the dingy pane.

The world is old, and he and I are old,
  Men know no longer how to live or die;
The joy of life is as a tale long told,
  And beauty begs in rags of passers by.

I would I might return for but one day,
  Before the northern cold has reached my heart,
And then be laid to rest beneath the bay
  In green depths where the still sea creatures dart.

There would I lie upon the soft white sand
  And watch the seaweed swaying in the stream,
And gaze up on the once so happy land,
  And wander in the past—and dream—and dream.

THE DEAD BIRD.

Little dead bird, so still and cold,
  Lying asleep on a crumpled wing,
The tale of a captive life is told,
    Little dead bird.

Singing for joy of the morning sun,
  You seemed so full of laughter and life,
But you sang no more when the day was done,
    Little dead bird.

You will sing no more on the window-sill,
  Nor flutter your wings in the tiny cage,
For the gay sweet voice for ever is still,
    Little dead bird.

Only a ball of golden fluff,
  Stiff on the floor of a lonely cage,
But the smaller sorrows are sorrow enough,
    Little dead bird.

Little dead bird—ah, well, who cares?
  But my eyes are dim for the needless pain,
And the poor little soul as home it fares
    Unto God again.

THE SECRET FOUNTAIN.

Ah, seek not in a draught of Hippocrene
  To find the inspiration ye desire;
Amid its scented rushes do not lean
  To drink, nor to its music tune your lyre.
The twin peaks of Parnassus do not know
The holy blooms of song, nor do they grow
  Amid the thickets of Mount Helicon.

Descend, and labour with the damned in hell,
  Drink deep of bitter-watered Acheron,
Learn all the sorrow that the dead can tell,
  Weep with the souls that on the storm are blown;
So shall ye sound the depths of human grief,
That ye may sing sad songs to bring relief
  And quiet unto men of weary days.

Poems are born of torment of the heart,
  Anguish of spirit, bitterness of soul,
The last farewell as the beloved depart,
  The drowning cry where rock-rent breakers roll;
Only the blind may surely lead the blind,
Only in death life's meaning may ye find,
  Only through suffering may ye come to joy.

HOME COMING.

(After Charles Guérin.)

My straying footsteps led me home to-night;
  And lo, beside the fire as of old,
The shadow of a sorrow, in whose sight
  My pride was broken and my heart grew cold.

A moment's shy surprise disturbed her calm;
  She whispers "Pilgrim, is it thou?" then slips
Around my neck a tender little arm,
  And holding me, she draws me to her lips.

"Where'er thy wandering footsteps may have strayed,
  Beyond the seas and over dale and hill,
Has not my presence always with thee stayed,
  Invisible, but thy companion still?

Was it not I that scattered to the winds
  The old sad memories, that bitter ash,
Which, ah, how oft, the dreaming traveller finds
  Has spoilt the bread he carries in his sash?

Alas, in vain; for thou returnest home
  With all thy troubles vanquished, and thou art
A passion-sated lover, who hast come
  To break with her that once possessed thy heart."

So did she chide me, and I hid my face,
  Nor answered; then she raised me to my feet,
And offered me her lips in close embrace,
  My inspiration's source, but bitter-sweet.

And then with wondrous tenderness said she,
  "Henceforth for ever lonely be my life,
Though, O my poet, I am all to thee,
  Thy mother, daughter, sister, muse, and wife!

I pray thee, have no hatred for me, dear,
  For I am cruel that I may be kind,
And heavenward the faithful souls I bear,
  For earthly grief a great reward to find."

But while she held me in her gentle arms
  And soothed me with an angel's sympathy,
Her face began to shine with strange new charms,
  No longer hard and stern, but heavenly.

TO THALIARCHUS.

(*Horace*, Book I. Ode IX.)

See how Soracte stands all white with snow,
And how the trees beneath the weight bend low,
  And all the streams are frozen fast with ice.

Disperse the cold; nor spare the logs to fling
Upon the flames, and generously bring
  The four year old wine from its Sabine jar.

The rest leave with the gods; for when they please
To still the winds that wrestle with the trees,
  The cypress and the agèd ash have rest.

To learn the morrow's secret do not pine,
And whatsoe'er the day shall bring, assign
  A place upon life's ledger with the gains.

Despise not song and dance while yet grey hair
Is not. For thine the race, the lists, and rare
  Sweet whispers at the starlit trysting-place.

And thine the laughter that betrays the maid
In hiding from thee, thine the forfeit paid
  And stolen from her unresisting hand.

AT PEACE.

(*Horace*, Book I. Ode XXXVIII.)

I hate the Persian grandeur and display,
  I hate their garlands that with bast are twined;
  Ah, boy, for me, I pray, seek not to find
The last dear rose-bud where it hides away.

Nay, in thy kindly labour naught at all
  Unto the myrtle would I have thee add;
  It does not misbecome thy service, lad,
Nor me that drink beneath my vine-girt wall.

FRUSTRA.

(*Horace*, Book II. Ode XIV.)

Ah, Postumus, the years slip fast away,
Nor can thy piety one hour delay
  Old age or wrinkles or untamèd death.

Nor if three hundred bullocks thou shouldst kill
Each day for Pluto, couldst thou bend his will,
  Who holdeth Geryon and Tityon.

Ah, no! we all, for whom Earth's stores are spread,
Must one day face the Stygian water's dread,
  Caesar and Caesar's humblest menial slave.

In vain we shun the blood and din of war,
In vain from stormy seas we turn afar,
  In vain we flee from Auster's piercing gale.

We all must see Cocytus' inky hue,
And, by its wandering stream, the race untrue
  Of Danaus, and Sisyphus' long toil.

Home, native land, sweet wife, must all be left,
And naught from thy belovèd garden reft,
  Save sprays of cypress, for its short-lived lord.

Thy hoarded Caecuban an heir shall waste,
Thy marble pavements splendid wine shall taste,
  That well indeed had graced a priestly board.

ENVOI.

We have lost Eden; we are driven forth
  To wander in the waste lands of the world
With bleeding feet, and from the corpse-white north
  Into our eyes the stinging sleet is hurled;
Yonder the City of Earth's Glory towers,
And fair it is, but not as Eden bowers
  At sunrise when the lily-buds uncurled.

O Eden, where the grass is always green,
  And where the roses do not fall or fade,
Awhile in Arcady I too have been,
  Awhile among its thickets I have played;
But now, alas, we may re-enter never,
For Childhood's Gate is barred to us for ever,
  And it is all in vain that we have prayed.

We bartered Eden for a golden fruit,
  Knowledge of good and evil, and we ate,
And found it bitter as any magic root
  That helps a sorcerer's unholy hate;
Then were we driven weeping from the garden,
And age and sin are swift the hearts to harden
  Of men, who were but happy babes of late.

Ye can not bribe the Guardian of the gate,
  Ye can not quench his flaming sword with tears;
In vain ye threaten and in vain placate
  The changeless spirit of the wide-winged years;
This Eden, whose fond memories are our pleasures,
Its other name is childhood, and its treasures
  We scarcely knew until it was too late.

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